

## Two Sea-Dyak Legends.

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There are many fairy tales and legends known to the Sea-Dyaks of the present day. These seem to be handed down, by word of mouth, from generation to generation from ancient times.

These stories may be roughly divided into two classes:—

I. Those which are purely fabulous and related as such, and are simply meant to interest and amuse, and in these respects resemble the fairy tales familiar to us all; and

II. Those which are believed to be perfectly true, and to have actually taken place, and are the traditions respecting their gods and preternatural beings. These form in fact the Mythology of the Dyaks.

To the first class belong a large collection of stories corresponding to the Adventures of Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit. In the Dyak tales, the *Plandok* and the *Kekura* (the mouse deer and the tortoise) act always in concert, and their combined intelligence is victorious over the rest of the animal world. To this class also belong the numerous stories related of *Apai Samu-mang* the Dyak type of cunning and wiliness—and *Apai Saloi*—the typical Dyak fool.

To the second class belong the many and varied adventures of *Klieng*, the great hero of ancient times, and his wife *Kumang*, the Dyak Venus, as well as the traditions relating to the gods believed in by the Dyaks of the present day. To these must be added certain stories which give a reason for some of the curious customs observed by the Dyaks. The two Dyak Myths which follow belong to this latter class.

## I.

## Danjai and the Were-Tiger's Sister.

Once upon a time there lived a great Chief named *Danjai*. He was the head of one of the longest Dyak houses that were ever built. It was situated on a hill in the midst of a large plantation of fruit trees. *Danjai* was said to be very rich indeed. He possessed much farming land, many fruit trees, many *Tapang* trees, where the wild bees make their abode, and from which the sweet honey is obtained, and in his room there were many valuable jars of various kinds, and also a large number of brass vessels; for the Dyaks convert their wealth into jars and brass-ware to hand down to posterity. Every year he obtained a plentiful harvest of paddy much more than he and his family could consume and he had always much paddy for sale, so much so that the news of his wealth travelled to distant lands, and many from afar off would come and buy paddy from him. *Danjai* also possessed many slaves who were ready to help him in his work. All the people in his house had a very high opinion of his judgment, and were ready to obey his decisions, whenever he settled any of their disputes. So great indeed was his reputation for wisdom, that men from distant villages would often consult him and ask his advice when in any difficulty. He had also great fame as a brave warrior, and during expeditions against the enemy, he was the leader of the men of his own village and of many villages around, for all liked to follow such a brave man as *Danjai*, who was sure to lead them to victory. Over the fireplace in his verandah he had, hanging together in a bunch, the dried heads of the enemies whom he himself had killed.

Now this man *Danjai* had a very pretty wife whom he had recently married, but the marriage feast had not been held, because he had not yet obtained a human head from the enemy as a token of his love for her: for this girl was of a good birth and a Chief's daughter and wanted the whole world to learn, when they attended her marriage feast, what a brave man her husband was.

*Danjai* said to his young wife, "I will hold a meeting of the Chiefs around, and tell them that we must all get our war-boats ready, as I intend leading an expedition against the enemy.

I should like to bring you a human head as a token of my love, so that you may not be ashamed of your husband. And as soon as I return, we will have the wedding feast."

And though his wife was sorry that her husband intended leaving her, still she did not oppose his wishes, for she wished him to come back covered with glory.

So a council of war was held, and *Danjai* told the assembled Chiefs what he intended to do, and it was decided that all should begin at once making war-boats, which were to be ready in two months' time.

*Danjai* assisted by his slaves and followers, had been at work at his boat for several weeks, and it was nearly finished. It was a beautiful boat made out of the trunk of one large tree, and *Danjai* was proud of his work. He was so anxious to finish his boat, that one day he started very early in the morning, before his breakfast was ready, and he asked his wife to bring his food to him later on to the part of the jungle where he was working at his boat.

So Mrs. *Danjai* cooked the food and then ate her own breakfast. Then she made up small bundles of rice and also put together some fish and salt, and placed all in a little basket to take to her husband. She had never been out in the jungle by herself before, but she was not afraid, for her husband had told her the way, and she could hear the sound of his adze as he worked at his boat not very far off. She hung her basket over her left shoulder and, holding her small knife in her right hand, went cheerfully on. Presently she came to the stump of a tree on which was placed a bunch of ripe rambutan fruit. They looked so tempting that she could not help eating some of them, and as they were very nice, she put what remained in her basket, saying to herself, "Perhaps *Danjai* forgot to take these fruits with him and left them here. I will take them to him myself, he will no doubt be glad to eat these ripe fruits after his hard work."

Now there was in that land a Were-Tiger, that was much feared by all who lived around. He had the appearance of a man, but at times would transform himself into a tiger, and then he would attack human beings and carry off their heads as trophies to his own house. But he never attacked any unless

they had first done wrong by taking something which belonged to him. So this Were-Tiger would leave tempting fruit by the side of jungle paths, and on the stumps of trees, in the hope that some tired traveller would take and eat them. And if any one ate such fruit, then he or she was doomed to be killed by him that same day. But all knew about him, and though he placed many tempting baits in all parts of the jungle, no one touched his fruit, for all feared the fate which awaited them if they did any such thing. But *Danjai*'s wife knew nothing about the Were-Tiger. No one had told her of him, and she had never been out before in the jungle by herself, and she had never been warned not to touch any fruit she might find lying about.

"Oh *Danjai*," she said, as soon as she met her husband, "I am afraid I am rather late. You must be very tired and hungry, working the whole morning at your boat without having had anything to eat. Never mind! Here is your breakfast at last." And she handed the basket which contained his food to her husband.

Now *Danjai* was really very hungry, so he was glad to see his food had arrived. He thanked his wife and at once began to empty the basket.

The first thing he saw was the ripe rambutan fruit at the top, and he asked his wife where she got them from. She told him she had found them on the stump of a tree by the wayside, and she said she thought they had been left there by him. She added with a smile, that they were very good as she had eaten some herself.

Then *Danjai*, brave man though he was, turned pale with fear and anxiety.

"We must not linger here a moment," he said to his wife. "Hungry though I am, I will not eat my food here. We must both hurry home at once. You have taken and eaten fruit belonging to the Were-Tiger, so much feared by all. It is said that whoever touches his fruit will surely die a terrible death: and you are the first person I know who has done so."

*Danjai* hurriedly gathered together all his tools and told those that were with him of his trouble, and they all started and walked silently back. *Danjai* was wondering how he was to

avert the fate which awaited his young wife. She was silent, because she saw her husband was troubled, and she was sorry that she had caused him grief.

As soon as they arrived at the house, *Danjai* sent for all the men round about and told them what had happened, how his wife had taken and eaten the fruit of the Were-Tiger. He begged them all to help to shield her, for the Were-Tiger was sure to have his revenge, and come and take the head of his wife.

So they all prepared themselves for the tiger's visit by sharpening their knives and spears. Some men placed themselves on the roof of the house, others in the verandah. The ladder leading up to the house was also guarded, and so were all parts of the house by which he was likely to force an entrance. As for *Danjai*'s wife, they hid her beneath some mats and sheets in the room, and twelve brave men stood round her with their swords drawn, ready to save her life even at the cost of their own.

Just before dark they heard the roar of the tiger in the distance. Though still a long way off, the sound was very terrible to hear, and the men all grasped their swords and spears firmly, for they knew the tiger would soon be upon them.

Once more the tiger's roar sounded, nearer and clearer, and then they heard him crash through the leaf thatch roof and fall into the room. There was a great commotion among the men, but though all tried to kill the animal, none could see him. Soon after they heard a roar of triumph from the tiger outside the house. They lifted up the mats and sheets which covered *Danjai*'s wife, and there they saw her headless body! The Were-Tiger had succeeded in his attack, and had carried off the head of his victim!

Loud was the weeping and great the lamentation over her dead body. She was so young to die! And what death could be more terrible than hers whose head had been carried away by her murderer! All in the house mourned her loss for seven days and during that time the house was very quiet, as all lived in their separate rooms, and did not come out into the common verandah to do work or to talk to each other.

The death of his wife grieved *Danjai* very much. But though his grief was great, his desire for revenge was greater still.

Very early on the morning of the next day, *Danjai* started after the tiger. The drops of blood which had fallen could plainly be seen on the ground, and he had no difficulty in finding out in what direction the tiger had gone. On and on he tracked the blood till he came to a cave at the foot of a high mountain. The sides of the cave were splashed with blood, so *Danjai* walked boldly in, determined to revenge the death of his wife. It was not very dark in the cave. In the distance he could see an opening and he hurried towards it.

He came out on the other side of the mountain, and saw a large plantation of sugar-cane and plantain trees. Beyond this he saw a long Dyak house.

"This," he said to himself, "is surely the abode of the Were-Tiger, and soon I shall have an opportunity of revenging the death of my wife."

He planted two sticks across one another in the ground to mark the opening in the mountain, so that he might not miss his way on his return, and then he boldly walked towards the house.

He followed a path through the sugar-cane plantation—still tracking the drops of blood upon the ground—until he came to the ladder leading up to the house. He was so anxious to attack his wife's murderer, that he did not pause to ask—as is the usual Dyak custom—whether he might walk up or not, but went straight on into the house. Men sitting in the verandah asked him, as he passed them, where he was going and what he wanted, but he did not answer them. His heart was heavy within him, thinking of his dead wife, and wondering whether he would be able to accomplish his task, and whether he would succeed in leaving the house as easily as he came in. But he was determined to avenge his wife's murder, and he would not shrink from any difficulties in the way.

He stopped at the room of the head of the house, and a girl asked him to sit down, and spread a mat for him. He did so, and the girl went into the room to fetch the brass vessel containing the betelnut ingredients which the Dyaks love to chew. As he sat down, he saw drops of blood on the fire-place, and looking up he noticed a fresh head, still dripping with blood, among the other skulls hanging there. He recognised it at a glance—it was the head of his loved wife! !

The girl came out with the brass vessel of betelnut and said: "Help yourself *Danjai*. We did not expect you to visit us so soon. Please excuse me for a little while, I have to attend to the cooking. But you will not be alone for my brother will soon be back. He has only gone to the plantation to fetch some sugar-cane."

So *Danjai* sat on the mat by himself, thinking what he was to do next and what he was to say to his wife's murderer when he came in. Soon the Were-Tiger arrived, carrying on his shoulder a bundle of sugar-cane.

"I am very pleased to see you *Danjai*," he said, "would you like some sugar-cane? If so, help yourself."

*Danjai* was so sad thinking of his wife, that he did not notice how curious it was, that they should know his name when they had never seen him before. He did not feel at all inclined to eat sugar-cane, but lest his host should think he had come to kill, and to put him off his guard, he pretended to eat a little. He heard the Were-Tiger say to his sister in the room, that she was to be sure to have enough food cooked, as *Danjai* would eat with them that evening. Then he left them and went to the river to bathe.

The sister came out of the room, and spoke to *Danjai*, who was still sitting in the verandah, and asked him to come into the room as she had something to say to him.

"Yes, *Danjai*," she said to him in a kind tone of voice, "I know of your trouble and I am sorry for you. However, if you follow my advice, all will be well. You must be careful, for my brother is easily put out, and has no scruples about killing any who displease him. Even our own people here hate him, for he is so merciless; but no one dare attack him, for all fear him greatly. Now listen attentively to what I have to say. When I put out the plates of rice in the room presently, do not take the one he tells you to have: take any of the others, for the one he wishes you to have is sure to contain some poison. Later on, when you retire to rest, do not spend the night on the mat spread out for you, but sleep somewhere else, and put the wooden mortar for pounding paddy on the mat in your stead: and so again on the second night, place the wooden mill for husking the paddy on your mat: and on the third night a roll of

the coarse matting used for treading paddy. If his three attempts to kill you are unsuccessful, then he will be in your power and will do what you command. But even then there is still danger, and you must not do anything rash, but ask my advice again later on. But go outside now into the verandah, for I think I hear my brother returning from his bath. I must make haste and put out the food for you all to eat."

Soon the Were-Tiger came in and sitting on the mat by *Danjai* asked him the news and how matters were in his country. *Danjai* answered little for he was very sad, besides his host always laughed at him whenever he spoke. The fact was that he was amused at the idea of the man, whose wife he had killed, sitting in his verandah and talking to him in a friendly way.

The sister came out of the room and asked them in to have their meal. All happened as she said it would. *Danjai* remembered her advice and did not take the plate of rice his host offered him. But he was too sad to eat.

In the evening *Danjai* and the Were-Tiger sat by a fire in the verandah. Over this fire hung several human heads. The tears came into *Danjai's* eyes as he sat there and saw the head of his dear wife being scorched by the fire. He felt inclined there and then to grasp his sword and attack the murderer of his wife; but he restrained himself remembering the advice of the Tiger's sister.

The Were-Tiger said to him with a nasty laugh, "What is troubling you that you should weep?"

"I am not troubled about anything," said *Danjai*, "but the smoke of the fire is too much for my eyes, and it makes them water and feel sore."

"If so," said his host, "let us put out the fire and retire to rest, as it is very late."

Two mats were spread out for them, one on each side of the fire-place, and they lay down to sleep. But *Danjai* kept awake, and when his companion was asleep, he rose and placed the wooden mortar for pounding paddy on his mat, and covered it over with a sheet; and he himself retired to a safe place as he was advised to do by the Tiger's sister. He watched to see what would happen and he was not disappointed. Not long after, he saw the Were-Tiger wake up and fetch a sword, and walk

up to the place where he was supposed to be asleep. With the sword he made two or three vicious cuts at the wooden mortar and said:

“Now *Danjai*, this will settle you. You will not think of revenging yourself on me any more.”

Then *Danjai* cried out from where he was, “What is the matter? What are you doing?”

“Oh *Danjai*! Is that you?” said his host, “I did not mean to hurt you. I had a bad dream, and I sometimes walk in my sleep. How lucky it is you were not lying on the mat! I should have certainly killed you, and I should never have forgiven myself for doing so. Please understand I meant no harm to you, and let us lie down to rest again.”

On the two following nights the Were-Tiger attempted to kill *Danjai*, but failed each time, because following the advice given him, *Danjai* placed first the wooden mill for husking the paddy on his mat, and next a roll of coarse matting used for treading paddy. His host made the same excuse for his strange behaviour each time.

On the morning of the fourth day, after the Were-Tiger had left the house to see whether any fish had been caught in his fish trap, his sister asked *Danjai* to come into the room as she had something to say to him before he left to return home.

“Now *Danjai*,” she said, “as I told you before, since my brother has not been able to kill you these three days, he is in your power. After breakfast ask him to accompany you and show you the way back to your country. When you have both come to the further end of the sugar-cane plantation, ask him to sit down for a little while, and say you would like to eat some sugar-cane, before you leave him and go on your journey alone. When he gives you the sugar-cane, ask him to lend you his sword, giving as an excuse that yours is not sharp enough for peeling the sugar-cane, or that it is stuck fast in its sheath and cannot be drawn. When he hands you his sword, you must attack him with it and kill him. My brother is invulnerable to any other sword but his own. When you have killed him, cut off his head and bring it to me, and I will give you your wife’s head in exchange for it. On no account are you to take his head away with you. If you do so, I will follow you to your country and take my revenge.”

A few minutes after this conversation, the Were-Tiger returned with a basket full of fish. Some of these were soon cooked, and they sat down to breakfast.

Soon after they had eaten, *Danjai* told his host that he must be returning to his own country, and asked him to accompany him and show him his way back. So they started together and walked through the sugar-cane plantation.

Just as they came near the end of it, *Danjai* asked his companion to stop. He said he would like to have some sugar-cane before going on.

"I am sorry I did not offer you any," said the Were-Tiger: "it was very forgetful of me. Never mind, I will at once cut down some sugar-cane for us."

When he had brought the sugar-cane and had finished peeling the piece he wanted for himself, *Danjai* said to him,

"Please lend me your sword, for mine is stuck fast in its sheath and I cannot draw it out."

The Were-Tiger suspecting nothing, handed the sword to him, and *Danjai* began peeling his sugar-cane.

Just then the Were-Tiger turned round to look at his house, and *Danjai* seizing his opportunity, gave him a blow with the sword in his hand and killed him. Then he cut off the head and carried it back with him to the house he had just left.

When he came near, he saw the sister watching for his return, and standing at the top of the ladder leading up to the house. He followed her into the house, and gave her the head of her brother.

"You ought to be quite satisfied now, *Danjai*," she said, "for you have killed my brother, and have taken your revenge for the death of your wife. I want you to promise me certain things before you go. First of all, you must not let anybody know that you have killed my brother. Next, on your return, you must go on the war-path and bring back to me the head of a woman, to enable me to put away the mourning of myself and my relatives, for the death of my brother. And when you return, I hope you will take me with you to be your comforter in the place of your dead wife: so that I may have some one to care for me, now that my brother is dead. And I give you now some locks of my hair, to be used as a charm to

make you invisible to the enemy, when you are on the warpath. Lastly, I advise you and your people, never to eat or to take away any fruit you may find lying about in the jungle, on the stump of a tree, or on a rock, without knowing for certain who put it there and to whom it belongs, or making sure that it has fallen from some tree near. This must be remembered from generation to generation. Whoever disobeys this advice will be punished either by death, as in the case of your wife, or in some other dreadful way. You may now have the head of your wife to take back to your country ; and as you may have forgotten the way, I will send one of my slaves with you, to show you in what direction you are to go."

As she finished speaking, she handed him his wife's head, and *Danjai* started off at once for he was anxious to get back.

He reached his house late that same evening. All his friends were glad to see him come back safe and sound. They had given up all hope of seeing him again. They were also pleased to see he had been successful in bringing back the head of his dead wife.

Soon after *Danjai*'s return from the Were-Tiger's country he gathered all his followers together and told them that he intended going on the war-path. As soon as they were able to get everything ready, they started for the enemy's country. They were very successful and succeeded in taking many heads ; but *Danjai*, protected as he was by the charm which he had received from the Were-Tiger's sister, was more successful than the others. They returned with much rejoicing, and a great feast was held in honor of their victory. The human heads were placed on a costly dish, and the women carried them into the house, with dancing and singing.

A few days after, *Danjai* started to fulfil his promise to the Were-Tiger's sister. He brought her back with him as his wife, and they lived very happily together for many years.

This story explains why the Dyaks, even at the present day, dare not eat any fruit they may find lying on the stump of a tree, or on a rock in the jungle. They fear that evil will happen to them, as it did to *Danjai*'s wife.

## II.

The Story of *Siu*,

Who first taught the Dyaks to plant Paddy and to observe the Omens of Birds.

Many thousands of years ago before the Paddy plant was known, the Dyaks lived on tapioca, yams, potatoes and such fruit as they could procure. It was not till *Siu* taught them how to plant Paddy that such a thing as rice was known. The story of how he came to learn of the existence of this important article of food, and how he and his son *Seragunting* introduced it among their people is here set forth.

*Siu* was the son of a great Dyak chief, but his father died when he was quite a child, and at the time this story begins, he lived with his mother and was the head of a long Dyak house in which lived some three hundred families. He was strong and active and handsome in appearance, and there was no one in the country round who was equal to him in strength or comeliness. When he was ready to go on the warpath, he was the admiration of all the Dyak damsels. On such occasions he appeared in a many coloured waistcloth, twelve fathoms in length, which was wound round and round his body. On his head was a plaited rattan band in which were stuck some long feathers of the hornbill. His coat was woven of threads of bright colours. On each well-shaped arm was an armlet of ivory. To his belt was fastened his sword and the many charms and amulets that he possessed. With his spear in his right hand and his shield on his left arm, he presented a splendid type of a Dyak Warrior. But not of his bravery nor of his deeds of valour against the enemy does this tale relate. It only gives an account of an adventure of his which ended in his discovery of Paddy.

One day *Siu* proposed to the young men of his house that they should take their blowpipes with them and go into the jungle to shoot birds. So one morning they all started early. Each man had with him his bundle of food for the day, and each went a different way, as they wished to see, on returning in the evening, who would be the most successful of them all.

*Siu* went towards a mountain not far from his house. He wandered about the whole morning in the jungle, but strange to

say, he did not see any bird nor did he meet with any animal. Everything was very quiet and still. Worn out with fatigue, he sat down to rest under a large tree, and feeling hungry, he ate some of the food he had brought with him. It was now long past midday, and he had not been able to kill a single bird! Surely none of the others could be so unfortunate as he!

He determined not to be beaten by the others, and after a short rest, he started again and wandered on in quest of birds. The sun had gone half-way down in the western heaven, and he was beginning to lose heart, when suddenly he heard not far off the sound of birds. He hurried in that direction, and came to a large wild fig tree covered with ripe fruit, which a large number of birds were busy eating. Never before had he seen such a sight! On this one large tree, the whole feathered population of the forest seemed to have assembled together! On looking carefully, he was surprised to see that the different kinds of birds were not all intermingled together as is usually the case. Each species was apart from the others. Here he saw a large flock of wild pigeons on one branch, and next to them were the parrots, all feeding together but keeping distinct from them. Upon this tree there were hornbills, wood-peckers, wild pigeons and all the different kinds of birds he had ever seen.

He hid himself under the thick leaves of a shrub growing near, very much pleased at his luck. He took a poisoned dart and placed it in his blow-pipe, and taking good aim, shot it out. He had aimed at one bird in a particular flock, and he hit it. But that bird was not the only one that fell dead at his feet. To his astonishment, he saw that many of the other birds that were near it were killed also. Again he shot out a dart, and again the same thing happened. The bird that was hit fell down dead, and with it the birds that were near it. In a very short time, *Siu* had killed as many birds as he could carry. As the little basket, in which he had brought his food, was too small to hold them all, he set to work and made a large coarse basket with the bark of a *Pendok* tree growing near. Then he put his load on his back and started to return home, glad that he had been so successful.

He tried to follow the way by which he had come, but as he had not taken the precaution to cut marks in the trees he passed,

he very soon found himself in difficulties. He wandered about, sometimes passing by some large tree, which he seemed to remember seeing in the morning. He climbed up a steep hill and went several miles through a large forest, but did not find the jungle path which he had followed early in the day. It was beginning to grow dusk and the sun had nearly set.

"I must hurry on," said *Siu* to himself, "in the hope of finding some house where I can get food and shelter. Once it is dark, I shall be forced to spend the night in the jungle."

He hurried on and luckily came to a part of the jungle which had lately been a garden.

"There must be some path from this garden," said *Siu* to himself, "leading to some house;" and he began to walk round it.

He soon found an old disused path which he followed and which led him to another path. By this time it was quite dark, and *Siu* made haste to reach the Dyak house which he felt sure was not very far off. He soon came to a well, and not far off he saw the lights and heard the usual sounds of a Dyak house. He was glad to think that he would not have to spend the night in the jungle, but would be probably able to get food and shelter at the house.

He stopped to have a bath and hid the birds he was carrying and his blow-pipe and quiver in the brushwood near the well, hoping to take them with him when he started to return the next morning.

As he approached the house, he could hear the voices of the people there. When he came to the bottom of the ladder leading up to the house, he shouted, "Oh! you people in the house, will you allow a stranger to walk up?" At once there was dead silence in the house. No one answered. Again *Siu* asked the same question, and, after a pause, a voice answered, "yes: come up!"

He walked up into the house. To his surprise, he saw no one in the open verandah in front of the different rooms. That part of a Dyak house, usually so crowded, was quite empty. Nor did *Siu* hear the voices of people talking in any of the rooms. All was silent. Even the person who answered him was not there to receive him.

He saw a dim light in the verandah, further on, in the middle of the house, and he walked towards it. He wondered what could have happened to all the people in the house, for not long before he heard many voices.

"This seems to be a strange house," he said to himself. "When I was bathing and when I walked up to the house, it seemed to be well inhabited, but now that I come in, I see no one, and hear no voice."

When *Siu* reached the light, he sat down on a mat there. Presently he heard a woman's voice in the room say, "Sit down *Siu*: I will bring out the *pinang* and *sireh* to you."

*Siu* was very pleased to hear a human voice. Soon a young and remarkably beautiful girl came out of the room with the chewing ingredients, which she placed before him.

"Here you are at last, *Siu*," she said, "I expected you would come earlier. How is it you are so late?"

"I stopped a little while at the well to have a bath, as I was hot and tired."

"You must be very hungry as well," she said, "wait a moment while I prepare some food for you. After you have eaten we can have our talk together."

When *Siu* was left to himself, he wondered what it all meant. Here was a long Dyak house, built for more than a hundred families to live in, and yet it seemed quite deserted. The only person in it appeared to be the beautiful girl who was cooking his food for him. Then again, he wondered how it was she knew his name and expected him that day. All these things filled him with wonder and surprise.

"Come in, *Siu*," said the voice from the room, "your food is ready."

*Siu* was very hungry and went in at once, and sat down to eat his dinner.

When they had done eating, she cleared away the plates and put things back into their places and tidied the room. Then she spread out a new mat for him, and brought out the *pinang* and *sireh*, and bade him be seated, as she wished to have a chat with him.

*Siu* had many questions to ask, and as soon as they were both seated, he began:—

"Why are you all alone in this house? This is a long house, and many families must live in it; where are the others? Why is everything so silent now? I am sure I heard voices before I entered the house; but now I hear no sound."

"Do not let us talk about this house or the people in it for the present. I would much rather talk of other matters. Tell me of your own people, and what news you bring from your country."

"There is no news to give you," *Siu* replied. "We have been rather badly off for food, as our potatoes and yams did not turn out so well this year as we hoped."

"Tell me, what made you come in this direction and how it was you found out this house?"

"While I was hunting in the jungle to-day, I lost my way. After wandering about a long time, I found a path which I followed and came to this house. It was kind of you to take me in and give me food. If I had not found this house, I must have died in the jungle. To-morrow morning I must ask you to show me the way to my country, and also I must beg of you some food for my journey back. My mother is sure to be anxious about me. She is left all alone, now that I am away. My father died a long time ago, and I am her only son."

"Do not go away as soon as to-morrow morning. Stay here a few days at any rate."

At first *Siu* would not consent, but she spoke so nicely to him that she succeeded in persuading him to stay there at least a week. Then he went out to the verandah, and she brought out a mat for him to sleep on and a sheet to cover himself with. As *Siu* was very tired, he soon fell sound asleep, and did not wake up till late on the following morning.

He saw some little children playing about the next day, but he did not see any grown up people. He went into the room to have his morning meal, but saw no one there, except the girl he had seen the evening before. He felt very much inclined to ask her again where the people of the house were, but he did not do so, as she did not seem inclined to speak about them.

Now though *Siu* knew it not, this was the house of the great *Singalang Burong*, the Ruler of the Spirit World. He was able to metamorphose himself and his followers into any

form. When going forth on an expedition against the enemy, he would transform himself and his followers into birds, so that they might travel more quickly. Over the high trees of the jungle, over the broad rivers, sometimes even across the sea *Singalang Burong* and his flock would fly. There was no trouble about food, for in the forests there were always some wild trees in fruit, and while assuming the form of birds, they lived on the food of birds. In his own house and among his own people *Singalang Burong* appeared as a man. He had eight daughters, and the girl who was cooking food for *Siu* was the youngest of them.

The reason why the people of the house were so quiet, and did not make their appearance, was because they were all in mourning for many of their relatives who had been killed some time back. Only the women and children were at home, because that same morning all the men had gone forth to make a raid upon some neighbouring tribe, so that they might bring home some human heads to enable them to end their mourning. For it was the custom that the people of a house continued to be in mourning for dead relatives, until one or more human heads were brought to the house. Then a feast was held, and all mourning was at an end.

After *Siu* had been in the house seven days, he thought he ought to think of returning to his own people. By this time he was very much in love with the girl who had been so kind to him, and he wished above all things to marry her, and take her back with him to his own country.

"I have been here a whole week," he said to her, "and though you have not told me your name, still I seem to know you very well. I have a request to make and I hope you will not be angry at what I say."

"Speak on; I promise I will not be angry whatever you may say."

"I have learnt to love you very much," said *Siu*, "and I would like to marry you if you will consent, so that I shall not leave you but take you with me, when I return to my own land. Also I wish you to tell me your name, and why this house is so silent, and where all the people belonging to it are."

"I will consent to marry you, for I also love you. But you must first promise me certain things. In the first place, you must not tell your people of this house and what you have seen here. Then also you must promise faithfully never to hurt a bird or even to hold one in your hands. If ever you break this promise, then we cease to be man and wife. And of course, you must never kill a bird, because if you do so, I shall not only leave you but revenge myself on you. Do you promise these things?"

"Yes" said *Siu*, "I promise not to speak of what I have seen here until you give me leave to do so. And as you do not wish it, I will never touch or handle a bird, and certainly never kill one."

"Now that you have promised what I wish, I will tell you about myself and the people of this house," said the maiden. "My name is *Endu-Sudan-Galinggam-Tinchin-Mas* (the girl Sudan painted like a gold ring), but my people call me by my pet names *Bunsu Burong* (the youngest of the bird family), and *Bunsu Katupong* (the youngest of the *Katupong* family). This house, as you noticed, seems very empty. The reason is that a month ago many of our people were killed by some of the people of your house, and we are all still in mourning for them. As you know, when our relatives have lately died, we stay silent in our rooms, and do not come out to receive visitors or to entertain them. Why are your people so cruel to us? They often kill our men when they go out fishing or hunting. On the morning of the day on which you arrived, all the men of this house went on the war-path, so as to obtain the heads of some of the enemy to enable us to put away our mourning. With us as with you it is necessary that one or more human heads be brought into the house, before the inmates can give up sorrowing for their dead relatives and friends. You see us now in the form of human beings, but all the people in this house are able to transform themselves into birds. My father *Singalang Burong* is the head of this house. I am the youngest of eight sisters: we have no brother alive. Our only brother died not long ago, and we are still in mourning for him, and that was the reason why my sisters did not come out to greet you."

*Siu* heard with surprise all she had to say. He said to himself that it was lucky he did not bring up to the house the

basket of birds which he had killed in the jungle, and that he had hidden them with his blow-pipe and quiver containing poisoned darts, in the brushwood near the well. He determined to say nothing about the matter, as probably some of her friends or relations were among the birds that were killed by him.

So *Siu* married *Bunsu Burong* and continued to live in the house for several weeks.

One day he said to his wife:—"I have been here a long time. My people must surely be wondering where I am, and whether I am still alive. My mother too must be very anxious about me. I should like to return to my people, and I want you to accompany me. My mother and my friends are sure to welcome you as my wife."

"Oh yes: I will gladly accompany you back to your home. But you must remember and say nothing of the things you have seen in this house. When shall we start?"

"We can start early to-morrow morning, soon after breakfast," answered *Siu*.

They started early the next day, taking with them food enough for four days, as they expected the journey would last as long as that. *Siu's* wife seemed to know the way, and after journeying for three days, they came to the stream near the house, and they stopped to have a bath. Some of the children of the house saw them there, and ran up to the house and said:—"Siu has come back, and with him is a beautiful woman, who seems to be his wife."

Some of the older people checked the children, saying:—"It cannot be *Siu*: he has been dead for a long time. Don't mention his name, for if his mother hears you talk of him, it will make her very unhappy."

But the children persisted in saying that it was indeed *Siu* that they had seen. Just then *Siu* and his wife appeared, and walked up to the house.

*Siu* said to his wife:—"The door before which I hang up my sword is the door of my room. Walk straight in. You will find my mother there, and she will be sure to be glad to welcome you as her daughter-in-law."

When they came into the house, all the inmates rushed out to meet them, and to congratulate *Siu* on his safe return.

They asked him many questions:—where had he been living all this time; how he came to be married, and what was the name of his wife's country. But *Siu* answered little, as he remembered the promise he had made to his wife, that he would not speak of what he had seen in her house.

When they reached the door of his room, *Siu* hung up his sword and his wife went into the room. But she did not see his mother as she was ill and was lying in her curtain. Then *Siu* followed his wife into the room and called out “Mother, where are you? Her is your son *Siu* come back!”

But his mother made no answer, so he opened her curtain, and saw her lying down, covered up with a blanket. She had been so troubled at the thought that her son was dead, that she had refused to eat and had become quite ill.

She would not believe that her son had really returned alive, and she said, “Do not try to deceive me; my son *Siu* is dead.”

“I am indeed your son *Siu*, and I have come back alive and well!”

“No!” she replied, “my son *Siu* is dead. Leave me alone, I have not long to live. Let me die in peace and follow my son to the grave.”

*Siu* then went to the box in which his clothes were kept, and put on the things that his mother had often seen him wear. Then he went to her again and said, “Even if you do not believe that I am your son, at any rate you might turn round and look at me, to make sure that I am not your son.”

Then she looked at him, and saw that it was indeed her son. She was so pleased at his return that she soon recovered from her illness, which was really caused by her sorrow and refusal to eat. *Siu* told his mother of his marriage, and she welcomed his wife with joy.

The women all crowded round *Siu*'s wife and asked her what her name was. She answered *Endu-Sudan-Galingam-Tinchin-Mas*. (The girl Sudan painted like a gold ring). They looked at her in surprise; they had never heard of such a name before.

“Where do you come from?” they asked. “What is the name of your country?”

"*Nanga Niga Bekurong Bebali nyadi Tekuyong Mabong*," (The mouth of the hidden Niga stream changed into the Mabong snail),\* was the reply.

They were astonished at her answer! They had never heard of such a country. They asked her of her people, but she would not say anything more of herself or speak about her people.

Everybody admired the great beauty of *Siu's* wife. No more questions were asked of her, as she seemed unwilling to answer. Her parentage remained a mystery.

In process of time *Siu's* wife bore him a son whom they named *Seragunting*. He was a fine child, and as befitted the grandson of *Singalang Burong*, he grew big and strong in a miraculously short time, and when he was three years old, he was taller and stronger than others four times his age.

One day as *Seragunting* was playing with the other boys, a man brought up some birds which he had caught in a trap. As he walked through the house, he passed *Siu* who was sitting in the open verandah. *Siu* forgetting the promise he had made to his wife asked him to show him the birds, and he took one in his hands and stroked it. His wife was sitting not far off, and saw him hold the bird and was very much vexed that he had broken his promise to her.

She get up and returned to her room. *Siu* came in and noticed that she was troubled and asked her what was wrong. She said that she was only tired.

She said to herself:—"My husband has broken his word to me. He was done the thing he promised me he would never do. I told him he was never to hold a bird in his hands, and that if he did such a thing, I would leave him. I cannot stay here in this house any longer. I must return to the house of my father *Singalang Burong*."

She took the water vessels in her hands, and went out as if to fetch water. But when she came to the well, she placed the water vessels on the ground, and disappeared in the jungle.

In the meantime *Seragunting*, tired with his play came back in search of his mother. She was very fond indeed of him, and

\* The Dyaks are fond of rhyming names, which often have no Special meaning.

he expected her to come to him as soon as he called out to her. But he was disappointed. No one answered his call, and when he looked in the room, she was not there. He asked his father where his mother was, and he told him that she had just gone to the well to fetch water and would soon be back.

But hour after hour passed, and she did not return to the house. So *Seragunting* began to be anxious, and asked his father to accompany him to the well to look for her. At first his father refused to do so, but when he saw his son crying for his mother, he went with him to the well. They found the water vessels there, but saw no signs of her.

"Your mother is not here, *Seragunting*," said *Siu*. "Perhaps she has gone to the garden to get some vegetables for our dinner. Let us go back to the house. If your mother is not back, early to-morrow morning, we will go and look for her." So they both returned to the house, taking back with them the water gourds which *Siu's* wife had left at the well.

Early the next morning, *Seragunting* and his father went in search of her. They took with them only a little food, as they expected to find her not very far off. But they wandered the whole day and saw no signs of her. They spent the night under a large tree in the jungle. Early the next morning, they were surprised to find a small bundle of food, wrapped up in leaves, near *Seragunting*. This food was evidently meant for him alone, as it was not enough for two, but he gave some of it to his father, who ate sparingly of it, so that his son might not be hungry. They wandered on for several days, and every night the same strange thing occurred—a bundle of food was left near *Seragunting*. *Siu* suggested to his son that they should return; but *Seragunting*, who during the journey had grown up into a strong lad with a will of his own, would not consent to do so, as he was determined to find his mother.

They wandered on for several days, deeper and deeper into the jungle; but could find no signs of her whom they sought. At last they came to the sea-shore. Here they rested for some days, in the hope that some boat might pass. Still, as before, each morning a bundle of food was found by *Seragunting*. If it were not for this food, they would have long ago died of starvation. On this food they managed to live, waiting

hopefully to see some boat appear to take them on their journey.

One day as *Seragunting* was watching, he heard the sound of paddles, and saw in the distance several long boats approaching. He hailed the first, and asked the men in it to take him and his father with them. The boat made for the shore, but the man in the bows recognised the two wanderers, and shouted out:—"It is *Siu* and his son *Seragunting*: do not let them come into the boat." The boat went on and left them to their fate. The same thing happened in the case of each of the other boats. As soon as *Siu* and his son were recognised, no one would help them.

Now these were the boats of the sons-in-law of *Singalang Burong*:—*Katupong*, *Beragai*, *Bejampong*, *Papau*, *Nendak*, *Pangkas*, and *Embuas*. They were not pleased at their sister-in-law marrying a mere mortal like *Siu*, and so refused to help him and his son.

The next day *Seragunting* saw what seemed to be a dark cloud come towards him over the sea. As it came nearer, it took the form of a gigantic spider, carrying some food and clothes.

"Do not be afraid," said the Spider, "I have come to help you and your father. I have brought you food and clothing. When you have had some food and changed your clothes, I will take you across the water to the land on the other side. My name is *Emplawa Jawa* (the Spider of Java). I know your history, and I will lead you to your mother whom you seek."

After they had eaten and put on the new clothes brought them, the spider told them to go with him across the sea. They were not to be afraid, but to follow his track, not turning to the right hand nor to the left. They obeyed his words. Strange to say, the water became as hard as a sandbank under their feet. For a long time they were out of sight of land, but towards evening they approached the opposite shore, and saw a landing place where there were a large number of boats. Not far off where several houses, and one longer and more imposing than any of the others. To this house the Spider directed *Seragunting*, telling him that he would find his mother there. The Spider then left them. As it was late, they did not go up to

the house that evening, but spent the night in one of the boats at the landing place. Among the boats were those belonging to the Sons-in-law of *Singalang Burong* which had passed *Siu* and his son as they waited on the sea-shore for some boat to take them across the sea.

When *Seragunting* and his father woke up next morning, they saw that the road leading up to the house had sharpened pieces of bamboo planted close together in the path, to prevent their walking up it. As they were wondering what they were to do next, a fly came to *Seragunting* and said:—

“Do not be afraid to walk up. Tread on the spikes that I alight on; they will not hurt you. When you come to the house you will find swords with blades turned upwards fastened to the ladder. Tread on the blades that I alight on and walk boldly up into the house.”

They did as the fly advised them, and were not hurt. The bamboo spikes crumbled under their feet, and sword blades they trod on were blunt and harmless.

The people of the house took no notice of them, and they sat down in the verandah of the house. Then the fly came to *Seragunting* and whispered to him:—“You must now follow me into the room. Your mother is there, lying in her curtain. I will point out to you which it is, and you must wake her up and tell her who you are. She will be very pleased to see you. Then when you come out into the verandah and see the sons-in-law of *Singalang Burong*, you must greet them as your uncles. They will disown you and pretend that you are no relation of theirs. But do not be afraid. You will be victorious in the end.”

*Seragunting* followed the fly into the room and went to the curtain on which it alighted. He called out to his mother, and she awoke and saw with joy her son. She embraced him, and he said to her:—

“How is it you went away and left us? We missed you so much, and were so sorry to lose you, that my father and I have been travelling for many days and nights in search of you. Now our troubles are over for I have found you.”

“My dear son,” she said as she caressed him, “though I left you I did not forget you. It was I who placed the food by you

every night. I left your father because he broke the promise he made to me. But you are my own son, and I have been wishing to see you, ever since I left your house. It was I who sent the Spider to help you and show you your way here. My love for you is as great as it ever was. We will go out now into the verandah, and I will introduce you to your uncles and aunts and to your grandfather. They may not welcome you, because they were opposed to my marriage to your father. But do not be afraid of them. We will be more than a match for them all."

Then she spoke to her husband *Siu*, whom she was glad to meet again. All three then went out into the verandah, which was now full of people. *Seragunting* called the sons-in-law of *Singalang Burong* his uncles, but they refused to acknowledge that he was their nephew.

They proposed several ordeals to prove the truth of his words, that he was indeed the grandson of *Singalang Burong*. In all of these *Seragunting* came off victorious.

As the men and boys were spinning their tops, they asked *Seragunting* to join them. He had no top of his own, so he asked his mother for one. She took an egg and uttered some mysterious words over it, and immediately it became a top. This she gave to her son, who went and joined the others in the game. Whenever *Seragunting* aimed at a top, he always hit it and smashed it in pieces. None of the others were a match for him. In a short time, all the tops except that of *Seragunting* were broken in pieces.

Then they suggested a wrestling match. *Seragunting* was quite ready to try a fall with any of them, old or young. Some of their best wrestlers came forward. The first two were overthrown so easily by him, that the others saw it was no use their attempting to wrestle with *Seragunting*.

As a last trial they proposed that all should go out hunting. Here they hoped to be more fortunate. All the sons-in-law of *Singalang Burong* took their good hunting dogs with them, confident of success. *Seragunting* was told that he could have any of the other dogs left in the house. There he saw a few old dogs, weak and useless for hunting. With these he was expected to compete against the others, and if he was not successful, both he and his father were to be killed! *Seragunting*

consented even to such an unfair ordeal as that. He called to him an old sickly looking dog, and gently stroked it. At once it became young and strong! While the others went forth into the jungle with a pack of hounds, *Seragunting* was only accompanied by one dog. In the evening *Katupong*, *Beragai*, *Bejampong* and the others all returned unsuccessful. Soon after, *Seragunting*'s dog appeared chasing a huge boar which made a stand at the foot of the ladder of the house. *Seragunting* asked the others to kill the beast if they dared. The spears cast at it glided off, and left the beast unharmed. Some of those who were rash enough to go near the animal, had a close escape from being torn in pieces by its tusks.

*Seragunting* armed with nothing better than a little knife belonging to his mother, walked up to the infuriated animal, and stabbed it in a vital part, and it fell down dead at his feet.

After these marvellous feats, all were compelled to admit that *Seragunting* was a true grandson of the great *Singalang Burong*. They all acknowledged him as such, and he was taken to his grand-father, who was pleased to see the lad and promised to help him throughout his life.

But *Siu* was unhappy in his new home. He could not help thinking of his mother whom he had left alone, and he was anxious to return to his own people. He begged his wife to accompany him back to his old home, but she refused to do so. It was decided that *Siu* and his son should stay in the house of *Singalang Burong* till they had obtained such knowledge as would be useful to them in the future, and that then they were to return to the lower world, bringing with them the secrets they had learnt from those wiser and more powerful than themselves.

All the people of the house were now most kind to *Siu* and his son, and were most anxious to teach them all they could. They were taken on a war expedition against the enemy, so they might learn the science and art of Dyak warfare. They were taught how to set traps to catch deer and wild pig. They were shown the different methods of catching fish, and learnt to make the different kinds of fish-trap used by the Dyaks of the present day. They remained in *Singalang Burong*'s house that whole year, so that they might have a complete

and practical knowledge of the different stages of paddy growing.

When the year was ended, *Seraqunting's* mother took him and *Siu* to see her father, *Singalang Burong*, so that they might receive from him his advice, as well as such charms as he might wish to give them before they left to return to the lower world of mortals.

*Singalang Burong* was sitting in his chair of state, and received them most kindly when they came to him. He bade them be seated on the mat at his feet, as he had many things to say to them. Then he explained to *Siu* and his son who he was, and the worship due to him, and they learnt also about the observance of omens, both good and bad.

"I am the Ruler of the Spirit World," said *Singalang Burong*, "and have the power to make men successful in all they undertake. At all times, if you wish for my help, you must call upon me and make offerings to me. Especially must this be done before you go to fight against the enemy, for I am the God of War and help those who pay me due respect."

"You have learnt here how to plant paddy. I will give you some paddy to take away with you, and when you get back to your own country, you can teach men how to cultivate it. You will find rice a much more strengthening article of food than the yams and potatoes you used to live upon, and you will become a strong and hardy race.

"And to help you in your daily work, my sons-in-law will always tell you whether that you do is right or wrong. In every work that you undertake, you must pay heed to the voices of the sacred birds:—*Katupong*, *Beragai*, *Bejampong*, *Papau*, *Nendak*, *Pangkas*, and *Embuas*. These birds, named after my sons-in-law, represent them and are the means by which I make known my wishes to mankind. When you hear them, remember it is myself speaking through my sons-in-law for encouragement or for warning. Whatever work you may be engaged in—farm work, house-building, fishing or hunting—wherever you may be you must always do as these birds direct. Whenever you have a feast, you must make an offering to me, and you must call upon my sons-in-law to come and partake of the feast. If you do not do these things, some evil is sure to happen to you. I

am willing to help you and to give you prosperity, but I expect due respect to be paid to me, and will not allow my commands to be disobeyed."

Then *Singalang Burong* presented them with many charms to take away with them. These were of various kinds. Some had the power to make the owner brave and fortunate in war. Others were to preserve him in good health, or to make him successful in his paddy planting and cause him to have good harvests.

*Siu* and *Seragunting* then bade their friends farewell, and started to return. As soon as they had descended the ladder of the house of *Singalang Burong*, they were swiftly transported through the air by some mysterious power, and in a moment they found themselves at the bathing place of their own house.

Their friends crowded round them, glad to see them back, safe and well. They were taken with much rejoicing to the house. Friends and neighbours were told of their return, and a great meeting was held that evening. All gathered round the two adventurers, who told them of their strange experiences in the far country of the Spirit Birds. The charms received from *Singalang Burong* were handed round for general admiration. The new seed paddy was produced, and the good qualities of Rice as an article of food explained. The people congregated there had never seen paddy before, but all determined to be guided by *Siu* and *Seragunting*, and to plant it in future. The different names of the Sacred Birds were told to the assembled people, and all were warned to pay due respect to their cries.

And so, according to the ancient legend, ended the old primitive life of the Dyak, when he lived upon such poor food as the fruits of the jungle, and any yams and potatoes he happened to plant near his house; the old blind existence, in which there was nothing to guide him; and then began his new life, in which he advanced forward a step, and learnt to have regularly, year by year, his seed-time and harvest, and to know that there were unseen powers ruling the Universe, whose will might be learnt by mankind, and obedience to whom would bring success and happiness.

## Note.

On receiving the above legends from Mr. Gomes I pointed out to him the curious fact that in the first legend the tiger—a beast quite unknown in Borneo—plays a prominent part, and suggested that this story may have been of Malay origin. He replies by referring to A. H. Everett's paper on the Tiger in Borneo, in Journal 5, p. 157, and says “the ‘Tree-tiger’ *Felis marmorata* is common enough. The Dyaks call it by a distinctive name ‘Kemaung dau’ or ‘Kemaung raras’ (dau and raras both being words meaning the branch of a tree). These would lead one to suppose that at one time they knew of some other species they called simply ‘Kemaung.’” Everett refers to traditions of the animal also, among the Sea Dyaks. One may compare these traditions of an animal apparently absent from the country with those of the Mias (Mawas) of the Malay peninsula.

*H. N. Ridley.*